

Loudoun County, Virginia

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Office of the County Administrator

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At a business meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Loudoun County, Virginia, held in the County Government Center, Board of Supervisors' Meeting Room, 1 Harrison St., S.E., Leesburg, Virginia, on Wednesday, May 7, 2014 at 4:00 p.m.

IN RE: INCLUSION OF PIT BULLS AND PIT BULL MIX TYPE DOGS IN
LOUDOUN COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADOPTION POLICY

Mr. York moved that the Board of Supervisors approve the recommendation of the Loudoun County Animal Advisory Committee and the Department of Animal Services to revise the Department's policy to allow for the adoption of Pit Bulls and Pit Bull mixes from the County's Animal Shelter.

Seconded by Mr. Williams.

Voting on the Motion: Supervisors Buona, Clarke, Higgins, Reid, Volpe, Williams and York – Yes; Supervisor Delgaudio – No; Supervisor Letourneau – Absent for the Vote.


DEPUTY CLERK FOR THE LOUDOUN
COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

(3-INCLUSION OF PIT BULLS AND PIT BULL MIX TYPE DOGS IN LOUDOUN COUNTY ANIMAL SERVICES ADOPTION POLICY)

**COUNTY OF LOUDOUN
DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL CARE AND CONTROL
POLICY DIRECTIVE**

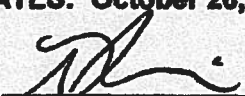
SUBJECT: ANIMAL ADOPTION PROCEDURES POLICY # 502

EFFECTIVE DATE:

INITIAL ADOPTION DATE: October 5, 1994

REVISION DATES: October 26, 2009

APPROVED:



DATE:

10/27/09

PURPOSE: The guidelines and procedures regarding adoptions and the processing of adoption applications below have been developed in order to ensure that animals entrusted to the care of the Loudoun County Department of Animal Care & Control (Department) are placed in responsible, appropriate, lifelong homes.

AUTHORITY: Code of Virginia §3.1-796.96 and Chapter 612 Codified Ordinances of Loudoun County

APPLICABILITY: All persons adopting animals owned by the Loudoun County Department of Animal Care and Control

DEFINITIONS: As found in the Comprehensive Animal Laws

POLICY:

A. Adoption Hours. The hours the Department is open for viewing adoptable animals are subject to change, and will be posted on the Department's web-site and at the front gate of the shelter facility.

B. Animals available for adoption. No animal will be eligible for adoption or transfer that demonstrates behaviors that are likely to pose a safety risk. Animals may not be advertised for adoption (i.e., discussed with members of the public) until they have been determined adoptable under the Canine Companion Readiness Program (CCRP), except in those cases where an animal is too ill or injured to receive a full assessment or as otherwise approved by the Director.

1. Dogs: Before determining if a dog is eligible for adoption, each dog will be individually evaluated for safety risk. Dogs that have demonstrated behaviors that may pose a safety risk will not be eligible for adoption. Dogs will be considered available for adoption after they have successfully completed an

assessment performed in accordance with the CCRP and assigned a Meet-Your-Match™ color.

Note: Pit Bulls (defined as American Pit Bull Terriers, Staffordshire Terrier, and Staffordshire Bull Terriers, as well as any mixes thereof) will not be made available for adoption. LCACC will also not make wolves or wolf hybrids available for adoption, as these animals are not considered to be domestic animals in Virginia.

2. **Cats:** Cats will be considered available for adoption after successful completion of an incoming examination and staff determination that the cat's behavior does not pose a safety risk to the public and assigned a Meet-Your-Match color.
3. **Other animals:** Small animals and livestock will be considered available for adoption unless their behavior indicates that they may pose a public safety risk. Reptiles and exotics will be considered available for adoption at the discretion of Department management, depending on the special needs of the animal, the legalities of ownership of the animal, and the potential threat the animal may pose to public health and safety should the animal get loose.
4. **Hold dates:** Surrendered and stray animals may be made available for adoption before their official hold period is up; however, staff must be careful to explain to adopters that the animal may be reclaimed, and must ensure that the animal does not leave the Department's custody before its hold date has expired.

C. Matching Adopters with Available Animals. The goal of the Department is to facilitate successful, long-term matches between pets and adopters. To that end, the Department staff utilizes its specialized training and expertise to not only evaluate the temperament and specific needs of the animals, but also to assess what type animal would be best suited for each potential adopter. Through its assessments, staff can make recommendations and determinations designed to ensure the best possible match of pet and adopter.

In an effort to make even better matches between adopters and available dogs, as part of the CCRP each dog will be assigned an Adoption Level (Level I through Level V) based on its individual needs and behaviors. Specific additional adopter requirements are assigned to each level, and adopters are expected to meet the requirements prior to adoption. Adoption criteria for each level are set forth in Section L, below.

In the event an adopter is unable find a suitable match during their visit to the Animal Shelter, staff may either provide the adopter with guidance as to other resources available for finding a suitable pet or take down the adopter's contact information in order to alert him/her/them when a possible match arrives.

D. General Adoption Conditions. All adoptions are subject to the potential adopter's ability to meet and/or agree to the following general adoption conditions; additional adoption conditions will be imposed based on the type of animal to be adopted, as set forth in Sections E and L, below:

- 1) All dogs and cats must be spayed or neutered before final placement. The only possible exceptions to this requirement are:
 - a. if the animal is either so elderly or suffers from a permanent medical condition such that the shelter's contract veterinarian believes that the spay/neuter surgery would be too risky for the animal; or
 - b. if the adopted animal is temporarily too ill or injured to perform spay/neuter surgery. Department policy requires that the every effort be made to treat the animal at the shelter, unless, in the opinion of Department management and in consultation with a veterinarian, it is determined that an adopted animal would recover more quickly and successfully in a home environment, such pre-surgery release is an option. In cases where pre-surgery release has been authorized, the adopter must sign a spay/neuter agreement requiring him/her to have the animal spayed/neutered within 30 days of adoption, or the adoption will be revoked. Pursuant to the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Laws, Section 3.1-796.96, subsection C, pre-surgery release is not available to adopters residing outside Loudoun County or a county adjacent thereto. (See Section G of this document for additional information).
- 2) In accordance with the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Laws, Section 3.1-796.96, subsection C, no more than two animals or a "family of animals" can be adopted to a household during any thirty-day period. The Department considers a "family of animals" to be three or more animals that have been raised together and are bonded such that their separation might be detrimental (particularly with respect to birds and small animals). However, because puppies and kittens tend to require a significant amount of time commitment from their adopters in order to become healthy and well-adjusted adults, the Department generally limits their adoption to 2 per household within a thirty day period.
- 3) There is no residency restriction that would prevent individuals from outside Loudoun County or adjacent jurisdictions to adopt animals (unless otherwise provided for in this policy). Out-of-jurisdiction adoptions will require a check with the animal control agency and/or humane organizations located in or near the adopter's community to ensure that there are no past or pending records of complaints or allegations of misconduct involving animals. If a home check is necessary for an out-of-jurisdiction adoption, that adoption may only go forward if the adopter's local jurisdiction is willing to perform that home check.
- 4) In accordance with the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Laws, Section 3.1-796.97.1, all dogs and cats four months of age and older must be vaccinated against rabies. Therefore, no Virginia resident will be permitted to adopt an animal without verification that their current dog(s) and/or cat(s), if any, is/are properly vaccinated. Out-of state adopters will be required to demonstrate that their animals comply with the rules of their local jurisdiction.

- 5) In accordance with the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Laws, Section 3.1-796.85, subsection A, all dogs four months old or older must have a current license. Therefore, no Virginia resident will be permitted to adopt an animal without verification that their current dog(s), if any, is/are properly licensed. Out-of state adopters will be required to demonstrate that their animals comply with the rules of their local jurisdiction.
- 6) All individuals 18 years of age or older residing in the household must participate in the selection and agree on the adoption of the animal(s), must be identified by name on the application, and must consent to the adoption in writing. If the additional adults in the household are adult children of the adopter(s), only the signatures/written consent of the adopter and the adopter's spouse/partner, if any, will be required.
- 7) Puppies aged five (5) months or younger will not be adopted into a household where they will be left unattended for extended periods of time. Young puppies cannot physically be expected to hold their bladders for many hours at a stretch without relieving themselves; the general rule of thumb is that young puppies should be left alone no more than one hour longer than they are months old (e.g., a two month old puppy should be left alone no more than three hours at a time). In addition, leaving puppies alone for long periods of time makes them less likely to grow into well-socialized adults. Individuals who are unable to meet the time commitments as specified above shall be denied the requested adoption.
- 8) All applicants adopting dogs must have an approved means of restraining the dog where it resides. The Department accepts six methods of restraint for dogs not under the immediate control of their owners: fenced yard, tree trolley, dog run, ground cable, swivel stake and invisible fence, as appropriate for the individual dog. Such restraints must be deemed adequate pursuant to Chapter 27.4 of the Virginia Comprehensive Animal Laws.
- 9) Any application for an animal that is to be kept outside or inside/outside (including dogs, cats, rabbits, livestock, poultry, etc.) will be subject to a home/property check, and any necessary shelter and/or restraining devices must be in place prior to finalizing the adoption. Home checks will also be required for all applicants interested in adopting a dog that is categorized as a Level V or "High Risk". For large animals such as horses or cattle, a minimum of three acres per animal, adequately fenced (no barbed wire fences are permitted; however a board fence may have a single barbed strand on top), is required; animals to be housed on smaller acreage require inspection and specific approval by the Department Director or his/her designee.
- 10) Applicants may be asked to furnish two personal non-family references who can provide information regarding the care the applicant provides his/her pets, which may be checked at the Department's discretion before the adoption is approved. Reference checks will be mandatory for adopters interested in adopting dogs classified as Level V or "High Risk".

- 11) For applicants who rent their residence, or for applicants who own property that is governed by a board or association, written permission for the adoption from a landlord, owner of the home or apartment, or condo board/association must be presented to the Department prior to finalizing the adoption. This permission must be in the form of a letter from the landlord or owner, on official stationery, stating that the animal to be adopted is permitted and must also be specific about the total number of animals permitted, the size and weight of each animal permitted, and any other parameters established by the landlord or property owner. If there are weight or breed restrictions in place, the final decision as to whether the animal meets those restrictions (or, in the case of a puppy, will meet weight restrictions upon maturity), will be made by Department management. For applicants interested in adopting a dog classified as a Level V or "High Risk" and who rent their residence, or who own property that is governed by a board or association, their written permission must expressly acknowledge the breed of the dog to be adopted.
- 12) Adopters are responsible for ensuring that their adopted pet complies with any and all applicable local ordinances (e.g. rabies inoculation requirements, leash laws, licensing requirements, etc.).

E. Special Needs Adoptions: Certain animals will be made available for adoption as "special needs" pets, meaning that they have either special medical or behavioral needs that require additional special adoption criteria based on their individual needs. Special needs adoption criteria will typically be posted by the Department before the animal is placed in adoption and provided to potential adopters, in writing, during the application process.

G. The Adoption Process.

Step 1: Meet Your Match: Adopters are encouraged to complete the Meet Your Match Survey in order to facilitate the counseling process.

Step 2: Visitation: Adopters must visit with the animal they are interested in adopting. Because animals are to be adopted as companions, if an adopter does not wish to touch or handle the animal he/she is interested in adopting, the Department management should be alerted and the adoption application carefully scrutinized. During the visit, adoption counselors should try to engage adopters in conversation that will elicit their experience with animals, their intentions with respect to adopting a new animal, and information that will ensure a good match between animal and adopter.

Step 3: Application. The adopter should complete, in full, the Adoption Application. The application is designed to provide Department staff insight into the past and present animal ownership of the applicant and the type of care the adopted animal would receive in the applicant's home environment. At the same time, the application process gives potential adopters the opportunity to assess whether adoption of an animal is right for them. The applicant may either pay their adoption fee upon submitting the application or may wait until their appointment to finalize their adoption contract (if the applicant signs their contract at the time they submit their application, they should submit payment at that time).

If the animal to be adopted is not already spayed/neutered (a vet visit is required) and if no additional materials are required from the applicant or there are no other issues to be resolved, in accordance with this policy, the applicant may sign their final contract at the same time they submit their application. The contract will be contingent upon the Department's review and final approval of the adoption application. Microchipping and vaccination/health information will be sent with the animal to its surgery appointment.

Step 4: Scheduling Surgery/Finalization: If the pet to be adopted has not yet been spayed/neutered, the applicant will select a veterinarian and a back-up veterinarian from the Department's Participating Veterinarian list. Staff will schedule the appointment for the spay/neuter surgery, and will advise the adopter as to the appointment date. Staff will also encourage the adopter to call the selected veterinarian prior to the surgery, to determine what, if any, extra fees may be imposed by the veterinarian as well as to request any other elective procedures and vaccinations, making clear that the Department covers only the basic surgical procedure.

Staff will also set up an appointment for the adopter to come back to the shelter prior to their animal's surgery date to sign their final adoption contract, if necessary. (See Step 3 above). If the animal is already spayed/neutered, staff will set up an appointment for the adopter to finalize their contract, if necessary, and pick-up their adopted animal up from the Animal Shelter.

Step 5: Go-Home Form and DVD: Staff will provide each adopter with a Go-Home form which indicates the animal number, the surgery date and location, if any, and required additional materials necessary to finalize the adoption (e.g., landlord approval, co-applicant signature, etc.). Adopters will also receive a copy of the Department's pet adoption DVD to help them prepare for their new arrival.

Step 6: Application Review. Each application must be reviewed by Department staff before the adoption is approved. Staff will review all applicable information databases to verify the application information, determine whether or not the applicant or someone in the applicant's household has a history of adverse interactions with the Department, ensure that the applicant's existing pets are in compliance with applicable laws (e.g., all dogs in the County must have valid, current licenses), and ensure that the adopter meets all adoption criteria applicable to the individual animal they are interested in adopting. Based on this review, the application will either be approved, denied, or approved pending receipt of additional information. Only the Department Director shall have authority to deny an adoption application.

Approval pending receipt of additional information will always be required where:

- 1) the applicant intends to adopt any animal to be kept primarily outdoors or as an indoor/outdoor pet, in which case a home/property check must be conducted to verify that the applicant has adequate facilities to properly and lawfully care for the animal while it is outdoors;
- 2) the applicant lives in an apartment, condo association, or other similar situation, in which case written proof of landlord permission must be provided by the applicant before final approval can be given;

- 3) where there is a co-applicant not present at the completion of the application, in which case he/she must either sign the application or submit a written, signed statement indicating that he/she concurs with the adoption and agrees to adhere to the rules and restrictions associated with the adoption contract;
- 4) the applicant resides outside Loudoun County, in which case verification must be given by the applicant's local animal control authority and/or humane society that no one in the applicant's household has a history of inhumane or unlawful behavior towards animals and that the applicant is in full compliance with all licensing and other applicable requirements; and/or
- 5) either review of the applicant's file or an issue discussed during the adoption counseling process has raised suspicions about the applicant's commitment to the care and well-being of the animal to be adopted, in which case a home/property check may be required to evaluate the condition of any animal currently residing in the household and to ensure that living conditions for the adopted animal will be lawful and humane.
- 6) The application is for an animal that has special needs or for a dog that is classified as a Level IV or higher.

Step 7. Finalization. Unless the adopter has signed their final contract upon submitting their application, as provided above, or has been notified in advance that the adoption application cannot be approved, the adopter is expected to return to the Department on the scheduled date and time to complete the adoption process. At that time, the adopter will read and sign the final adoption contract, pay the required adoption fee in full (if not already paid), and receive the microchipping and vaccination/health information for their adopted pet. If the adopted pet has already been spayed/neutered, it can leave the Department with the adopter once finalization is complete. If the pet has not been spayed/neutered, or there is some question as to whether or not the animal has been spayed/neutered, the adopter shall pick the animal up directly from the veterinarian's office after the spay/neuter surgery has been performed.

If the adopter fails to show up for his/her appointment to finalize, staff will attempt to reschedule the appointment (as well as any related surgery appointment(s)); however, if the adopter cannot be reached by the close of business on the day following his/her scheduled appointment, or if he/she fails to appear at the rescheduled appointment without notice, the adoption shall be canceled. Under such circumstances, the adopter may only reinstate after appealing the decision to the Department Director. Until this matter is resolved, priority will be given to any potential applicant wanting to adopt this same animal.

Step 8. Veterinary Visit. Department staff will arrange for unaltered adopted dogs and cats to be driven to their respective surgery appointments, and adopters may pick their adopted animal up directly from the veterinarian's office after the animal has been released.

Any other animals adopted from the Department are eligible for a free examination by a licensed veterinarian within seven days of the date of the adoption contract. Adopters are expected to make such examination appointments themselves. The free examination does not include vaccinations, treatments or boarding.

H. Illnesses: Should an adopted animal become ill before it is released to the adopter, it will remain in the shelter, under veterinary supervision, until it is deemed well enough to go to its new home. If an adopted animal has been delivered to a veterinarian to be altered but the veterinarian to perform the surgery has determined that it is too ill, the animal should be returned to the Department until it is well enough to be operated on. While the Department management has discretion to release an ill spayed/neutered animal to an adopter where circumstances warrant, such action will be carefully scrutinized to ensure the safety and well-being of the animal. (See Section D(1)(b) of this document for additional information).

I. Returns. If for any reason the adopter can no longer care for an adopted pet, the animal should be returned to the Department. The owner cannot sell or give away the adopted animal without prior approval from LCACC. If the adopter has an alternate placement in mind for the animal, the adopter must notify the Department and receive approval for such placement.

J. Refunds. If an adoption is denied by the Department or revoked by the adopter, the adoption fee will be refunded to the adopter in full. In the case of returned animals, a refund of adoption fees may be made only if the adopted animal is returned to the Department within five days of the date of the Adoption Contract, and then only in special circumstances at the discretion of the shelter management (e.g., if the adopter discovers they are allergic to the animal when they would have had no reason to suspect such allergy before the adoption). If an adopter has paid for a sterilization but a veterinarian, upon examination, has determined that the animal is already spayed/neutered, the spay/neuter portion of the adoption fee will be refunded to the adopter.

K. Puppies/Kittens and Children. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends caution in placing puppies and kittens in households with children under the age of 6 years, out of concern for the safety of the children. Therefore, in such situations, determinations as to whether such an adoption should be approved or denied will be based on the age(s) of the child(ren), the child(ren)'s prior experience with animals, and the compatibility between the child and the animal as observed by Department staff. If the Department staff, in their professional opinion, believes that the adoption will place either the child(ren) or the puppy/kitten at risk, the adoption may be denied.

L. Dog Adoption Criteria: All dogs and puppies available for adoption will be assigned an Adoption Level of I through V, based on the individual animal's needs and behaviors. For example, a Level I dog will exhibit behaviors that make it suitable for placement in virtually any type of home environment, and will therefore have minimal additional adoption criteria. Level V dogs, however, that either have behavioral challenges which require a more specialized home environment or that are at unique risk for misuse or abuse without proper precautions in place to ensure their safety, will have more restrictive adoption criteria. Adopters will be expected to meet the additional minimum adoption criteria for the level of dog or puppy they are interested in adopting prior to adoption. The adoption criteria for each Level are as follows:

Levels I and II:

1. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age, and will be required to produce photo identification. Any applicant between the ages of 18 and 21 will require a member of their "extended family" as a co-signer on the adoption contract. An "extended family" member is defined as a parent, step-parent, brother, sister, spouse, aunt/uncle, grandparent or guardian over the age of 21.
2. All adults in the household must participate in the selection of the dog and agree on the adoption.
3. All applicants must use an approved means of restraint for the dog when it is outdoors (leash, fenced yard, kennel, swivel stake, cable runner, or invisible fence).
4. Prior to adoption, all applicants must provide proof that they are in compliance with all applicable laws/regulations in place in their County of residence, including having all of their current cats/dogs, if any, vaccinated for rabies and having licenses, as required.
5. Puppies aged five (5) months or younger will not be adopted into a household where they will be left unattended for extended periods of time.
6. If the adopter cannot keep the adopted dog, they must agree to return the animal to Loudoun County Department of Animal Care & Control.
7. Dogs will not be adopted as guard dogs.
8. No animal will be adopted to persons having a history of ordinance violations, losing, giving away, selling, or having animals injured or killed by moving vehicles.
9. Applicants may be asked to provide non-family references and/or proof of employment or source of income.
10. Any application for a dog that will be kept unattended outdoors will require the completion of a home inspection to ensure that the dog has proper shelter and confinement while outdoors.
11. Applicants who do not own their residence or who own property that is governed by a board or association must provide written permission for the adoption from a landlord, owner of the home or apartment, or condo board/association.
12. Applicants must meet all special needs requirements for the animal, if any.

Level III:

Adopters of "Level III" dogs must meet the minimum adoption criteria as described in Level I and Level II, and the following:

1. In determining whether to place a particular "Level III" dog in a household, the Department will carefully assess factors such as the numbers and ages of children in the home and the numbers and types of other animals. Adoptions will be subject to approval based on staff's determination that the dog in question is suitable for that particular household.
2. Adopters may be required to participate in a shelter class or other comparable program that provides instruction for handling and behavioral issues.

Level IV:

Adopters of "Level IV" dogs must meet the minimum adoption criteria as described in Levels I, II, and III, and the following:

1. "Level IV" dogs will not be placed in homes where they are left outside unattended when the owner is not home.
2. Adopters must be 21 years or older and must present a valid driver's license.
3. "Level IV" Adopters are required to participate in a shelter class or other comparable program that provides instruction for handling and behavioral issues.
4. Recommend a "meet and greet" with dogs and/or other animals currently in household.

Level V:

The minimum adopter criteria for "Level V" dogs are as follows:

1. Adopters must be 21 years or older, must be a Loudoun County resident, and must present a valid driver's license.
2. "Level V" dogs will not be adopted out to households where one or more of the residents has been cited for having a dangerous and/or vicious dog or repeated instances of a dog running at large (2 or more instances documented by the Department).
3. In determining whether to place a particular "Level V" in a household, the Department will carefully assess factors such as the numbers and ages of children in the home and the numbers and types of other animals. Adoptions will be subject to approval based on staff's determination that the "Level V" dog in question is suitable for that particular household.
4. Adopters and all other adults living in the household will be required to attend a mandatory education class to be provided by LCACC.
5. A mandatory home check will be conducted before any "Level V" adoption is approved. Adopters must meet all adoption criteria prior to approval of the adoption. A follow-up check will be conducted within 90 days of the adoption to ensure continued compliance with adopter criteria, and additional home checks may be conducted at the discretion of the Department.
6. Adopters must have owned or personally cared for at least one other dog in the past -- no first time dog owners/caretakers will be permitted to adopt a "Level V".
7. Adopters will be required to provide a positive reference from the veterinarian who cared for the adopter's previous dog(s).
8. All members of the adopter's family must meet the dog to be adopted and participate in the selection process.
9. Recommend a "meet and greet" with other animals in the household.
10. "Level V" dogs will be adopted only as indoor family pets. Therefore, they will not be adopted into households where they will spend the majority of their time outdoors unsupervised or where they will be left outside when the adopters are not at home.
11. "Level V" dogs will only be adopted to households with securely fenced yards or where they must be walked on a leash (for example, apartment, condo or townhouse situations).

12. "Level V" dogs will not be permitted to run loose on the adopter's property outside a fenced area or to be chained, tethered, or kept in outdoor runs or pens.
13. Adopters who do not own their home must provide written notice from their landlord expressly acknowledging the breed(s), if applicable, of the dog to be adopted and indicating that he/she approves of the adoption.
14. Prior to adoption, all applicants must provide proof that they are in compliance with all applicable laws/regulations in place in their County of residence, including having all of their current cats/dogs, if any, vaccinated for rabies and having licenses, as required.
15. Puppies aged five (5) months or younger will not be adopted into a household where they will be left unattended for extended periods of time.
16. If the adopter cannot keep the adopted animal, they must agree to return the animal to Loudoun County Department of Animal Care & Control.
17. Dogs will not be adopted as guard dogs.
18. Applicants may be asked to provide non-family references and/or proof of employment or source of income.
19. Applicants must meet all special needs requirements for the animal, if any.

"High Risk" Dogs

In addition to the Level V Adoption criteria, the following additional adopter requirements will apply to all level of dogs considered to be "high risk" (as defined in the Department's Canine Companion Readiness Program):

1. Adopters will be required to attend a specialized education class provided by LCACC.
2. A mandatory home check will be conducted and adopters must meet all criteria prior to the approval of the adoption.
3. All members of the family must meet the dog and participate in the selection process.
4. In determining placement in a certain home, the department will carefully assess the factors such as the numbers and ages of children in the home and the numbers and types of animals. Adoptions will be approved based on the staff's determination that the dog in question is suitable for that particular household.
5. A "meet and greet" with other dogs owned by the adopters is required. "Meet and greets" with other household pets may be required at the discretion of LCACC staff.
6. These dogs will only be adopted into households with securely fenced yards or where they must be walked on a leash (apartment, condo, townhouse situations).

The AACTC, in conjunction with the Department Director, may change the Level assignment for a dog/puppy as warranted to ensure appropriate placement.

M. Adoption Criteria for All Other Animals

The following minimum adoption criteria apply to all animals other than dogs:

1. Applicants must be at least 21 years of age, and will be required to produce photo identification. Any applicant between the ages of 18 and 21 will require

a family member as a co-signer of the application. A family member is defined as a parent, spouse, aunt/uncle, and/or grandparent over the age of 21 years.

2. All adults in the household must participate in the selection of the animal and agree on the adoption.
3. Prior to adoption, all applicants must provide proof that they are in compliance with all applicable laws/regulations in place in their County of residence, including having all of their current cats/dogs, if any, vaccinated for rabies and having licenses, as required.
4. If the adopter cannot keep the adopted animal, they must agree to return the animal to Loudoun County Department of Animal Care & Control.
5. No animal will be adopted to persons having a history of ordinance violations, losing, giving away, selling, or having animals injured or killed by moving vehicles.
6. Applicants may be asked to provide non-family references and/or proof of employment or source of income.
7. Any application for an animal that will be kept outside or inside/outside (including cats, rabbits, livestock, poultry, etc.) will require the completion of a home inspection to ensure that the it has lawful shelter and confinement while outdoors.
8. Cats will not be adopted exclusively as mousers or as outside cats without benefit of daily food, care, adequate shelter and socialization. Cats may only be adopted as "barn cats" with the express permission of the Shelter Manager. A "barn cat" that lives outside, must: have access to adequate shelter; be provided with fresh food and water on a daily basis; have regular contact with humans; and receive regular veterinary care. Declawed cats may not be kept as outdoor or indoor/outdoor animals.
9. For large animals such as horses or cattle, a minimum of three acres per animal, adequately fenced (no barbed wire fences are permitted; however a board fence may have a single barbed strand on top), is required; adoption of large animals to be housed on smaller acreage requires specific approval by the Shelter Manager.
10. Applicants who do not own their residence or who own property that is governed by a board or association must provide written permission for the adoption from a landlord, owner of the home or apartment, or condo board/association.
11. Applicants must meet all special needs requirements for the animal, if any.

N. Criteria for Denial of Adoptions. The Department is dedicated to serve and protect the public's health and safety, and to assure the welfare of animals by promoting and providing for their safe, humane and lawful treatment. In order to further that mission, the Department must in some cases make the difficult decision to deny an application for adoption. All adoption denials will be based on evidence that can be documented and articulated, and should, wherever possible, serve as an opportunity for educating the potential adopter about responsible pet care.

The Department shall refuse an adoption under the following circumstances:

- 1) When the potential adopter, someone in the adopter's household, or someone with whom the animal will likely have regular contact, has:
 - a. been convicted of or charged with animal abuse, neglect, and/or failure to provide adequate care for an animal;
 - b. a history of failure to provide adequate care for an animal (as demonstrated by a founded complaint or investigation, 2 or more running at large violations for the same animal within a six month period, 2 or more animals lost and presumed deceased, etc.);
 - c. a history of surrendering one or more owned animals found by Department staff to be in such poor physical condition that immediate veterinary care was required.
- 2) When the potential adopter is under 18 years of age, wishes to give a pet as a gift to another person who has not participated in the adoption process, or wishes to adopt a pet for an individual who has been refused an adoption, or who would be refused under the criteria set forth herein.
- 3) When the potential adopter intends to:
 - a. use the animal for experimental or research purposes, for breeding or eating purposes, or to be used as bait or for feeding to other animals;
 - b. use the animal exclusively for guarding or as an attack dog (dogs are intended to be adopted as companion animals only except in cases where the dog is to be used as a working dog by an approved governmental agency);
 - c. a declawed cat as an outdoor or indoor/outdoor animal, or
 - d. use a cat exclusively as a mouser or outside cat without benefit of daily food, care, adequate shelter and socialization.
- 4) When the potential adopter refuses a required home check, or when a required home check reveals that the adopter does not have adequate shelter and/or acceptable means of restraint for the animal as required by law.
- 5) When the potential adopter has a schedule which necessitates that a puppy will remain unattended for long periods of time (the general rule of thumb being that puppies are to be left alone no more than one hour longer than they are months old).
- 6) When the potential adopter lives in an apartment, condo, or town house and cannot provide written proof from their landlord/condo board/association that the animal to be adopted is permitted to reside in the household.
- 7) When the potential adopter provides false or misleading information on their adoption application or during a home check, or fails to reveal relevant information.
- 8) When the adoption is for a "special needs" animal and the adopter does not meet the special additional adoption criteria required for said animal.

The Department reserves the right to refuse an adoption under the following circumstances on a case-by-case basis:

- 1) When the potential adopter, someone in the adopter's household, or someone with whom the animal will likely have regular contact, has:

- a. previously adopted an animal from the Department and allowed that animal to become lost or die under suspicious circumstances;
 - b. a history that demonstrates a lack of commitment toward animals (e.g. surrendering an animal(s) because of lack of time, failure to report lost animals or reclaim impounded animals, etc.),
 - c. recently had a pet die under suspicious circumstances or due to lack of veterinary care, or
 - d. otherwise demonstrated that they are unfit to properly care for a new animal.
- 2) When the adoption of the animal may pose a significant risk of harm to the adopted pet, other animals in the adopter's household, and/or persons living in the household, and there is no reasonable and/or apparent means of mitigating that risk. This may be due to either:
- a. the propensities of the animal available for adoption (e.g. adoption of an animal to be restrained by invisible fence when the animal has a history of escaping such devices);
 - b. the propensities of the animal(s) already in the home (e.g. the adoption of a kitten to a home with a dog that has killed or injured other cats); and/or
 - c. the interaction between the adopter's child(ren) and the animal in question (e.g. during visitation the staff witnessed the children aggressively and repeatedly pulling on the animal's tail with no attempt made by the adopter to correct such behavior).
- 3) When the adopter has been informed that the animal to be adopted has a specific medical concern (e.g. a broken limb, advanced periodontal disease, etc.) and refuses to promptly address such concern.
- 4) When the adopter wishes to adopt a dog but cannot or will not meet the minimum adopter criteria applicable for the dog's assigned Level.

The above lists are not intended to be all-inclusive, nor are they intended to eliminate eligibility for adoption based solely on the above criteria without considering unique facts and/or circumstances provided by potential adopters. The Department reserves the right to approve or deny an adoption based on the information provided by the adopter, other animal adoption agencies and/or references. Persons who have been refused an adoption may submit documentation disputing the reason for the denial and/or meet with the Department Director or his/her designee to discuss the decision.

Please note that the care and welfare of the animal to be adopted is the Department's first priority, and adoption denials are not intended to reflect a moral or ethical judgment of the prospective adopter's lifestyle or commitment to their pets.